



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2019

by Adrian Caines BSc(Hons) MSc TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/D/19/3229848

13 Oakden Street, London SE11 4UQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Paul Sadler against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 18/05244/FUL, dated 7 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 4 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is a roof top extension, set back 2.33 metres from front of building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Walcot Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a three storey terraced house over semi-basement located on the northern side of Oakden Street and within the Walcot Conservation Area (CA). This area to the rear of Kennington Road is mostly residential with neat two and three storey terraces of uniform appearance.
4. From the information before me and my own observations I consider that the significance of the CA derives from the uniformity of design, materials and largely unaltered London roof forms found on these terraces, which combines to create a strong visual coherence and attractive townscape. The appeal property and terrace it belongs to is typical of this character and thus makes an important and positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA and its significance as a designated heritage asset. This is reinforced in the Walcot Square Conservation Area Draft Character Appraisal 2016 (WSCACA), which lists 1-31 Oakden Street as buildings making a positive contribution to the CA. The document also recognises that the rear of properties are an integral part of the CA making a positive contribution to its character with consistent "*design and the rhythms produced by repetitive patterns.*" In my view, the London roof form is a key element of these rhythms and patterns to the rear and is further identified in the "Building Alterations & Extensions" Supplementary Planning Document 2015 (SPD) as a key aspect of local distinctiveness.

5. I accept that from directly in front of the appeal property the roof extension would be barely visible at street level because of its set back and height. However, I observed that it would be clearly noticeable from Wincott Street and the cut through to Oakden Street, as well as from the upper floors of the terrace on the opposite side of Oakden Street. From here, notwithstanding its height, materials and retention of the chimney stacks, the extension would disrupt the horizontal flow of the parapet, and in combination with the extension to No 15, would be highly intrusive and incongruous.
6. Furthermore, the rear of the roof extension would be visible from Bishops Terrace and the rear of the terraced properties in St Mary's Gardens. From here the boxy form and lateral ridge line of the extension would disrupt the distinctive symmetry and rhythms produced by the repetitive pattern of the peaks and valleys of the characterful London roof form, both individually and cumulatively with the extension to No 15. As a result, the form and character of the property would be detrimentally altered and its contribution to the significance of the CA diminished. The plain casement windows would also be markedly out of character with the existing building, as would the extension of the soil vent pipe, adding further to the harmful effects of the development overall.
7. The views of the development may not be identified as "*Noteworthy*" in the WSCACA, but they also contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area and are therefore important. Irrespective, the requirement for development proposals to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA applies with equal force whether or not the proposal is prominent or in identified 'noteworthy' views.
8. For all these reasons I conclude that the development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the building and to the visual coherence and distinctiveness of the area, and thus, would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. This is contrary to Policies Q5 (Local Distinctiveness), Q11 (Building Alterations and Extensions) and Q22 (Conservation Areas) of the Lambeth Local Plan (2015), and to the guidance of the SPD. Taken together, these seek good design, which positively responds to the original form and character of the host building, and which preserves, or where possible, enhances the historic environment and local distinctiveness.
9. This harm to the CA as a designated heritage asset would be 'less than substantial' in the terms of paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and is therefore required to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.
10. I recognise that the proposal would be likely to improve the accommodation within the appellant's property, but this would have very limited public benefit and would not be sufficient to outweigh the significant harm that I have identified above.

Other Matters

11. I note the neighbour's concerns over the obstruction of the side windows in the adjoining roof extension. This did not form part of the Council's refusal reasons and as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, I have not explored this any further.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons above, I conclude that the proposal would fail to accord with the relevant policies of the development plan and the Framework, and therefore the appeal should be dismissed.

Adrian Caines

INSPECTOR